

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 10, 2012

1124

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We write to urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to work in consultation with relevant Federal agencies and formally begin a comprehensive review of radiofrequency energy exposure limits for mobile phones. We have long believed that more research into the potential health effects of wireless emissions is necessary. Particularly in light of the recent recommendations by the Government Accountability Office on this issue, the FCC should undertake a serious review of the current limits.

Mobile phone use has exploded since the FCC put in place the current exposure limits in 1996, and the ways in which they are used has changed significantly since then. Mobile phones are no longer simply an accessory or a supplementary phone – more and more consumers are relying on mobile phones as their only telephone. As smartphones in particular become more ubiquitous, more consumers are carrying their phones with them at all times and keeping them closer to their bodies. Perhaps most critically, the age at which Americans own their first mobile phone is dropping significantly as more and more teenagers and children now have phones.

Given all of the changes that have occurred in mobile phone use in the more than 15 years since the limits were put in place, we urge the FCC to begin a comprehensive review that takes into account 21st century usage habits and the most current scientific data. Consumers are being exposed to radiofrequency energy more frequently and for a much longer period of their lives than ever before. While the scientific community has not yet come to any final conclusions on the potential health effects of mobile phone use, there is more data available today than ever before.

There is no doubt that mobile phones have had a positive impact on our economy and on our ability to stay connected to one another. The prospects for the future are even brighter. We must be sure, however, that this technology is deployed in a manner that protects human health. We urge the FCC to conduct a serious review of the current limits and take any action necessary to protect the health of consumers.

Sincerely,


PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator


BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator


PETER WELCH
United States Representative

cc: The Honorable Robert M. McDowell, Commissioner
The Honorable Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner
The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Commissioner
The Honorable Ajit Pai, Commissioner



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

October 5, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

Thank you for your letter regarding radiofrequency energy exposure limits for mobile phones. I appreciate your interest in this matter and have directed the Chief of the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology to respond. I am pleased to provide the enclosed letter addressing your concerns.

If you have any additional questions or need any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot at the end.

Julius Genachowski

Enclosure



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

October 5, 2012

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senate
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

Thank you for your letter urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to begin a comprehensive review of its current radiofrequency (RF) exposure limits. The Chairman has asked me to respond on his behalf.

The Commission shares your concern that our regulations must protect the health of consumers with respect to exposure to radiofrequency (RF) emissions. As a matter of course, the FCC staff has continuously monitored the developments and research related to RF exposure and works closely with other federal agencies having appropriate health expertise.

While the expert U.S. and international organizations continue to expressly find no established link between mobile phone use and adverse health effects, we recognize that it has been many years since we conducted a formal review of our RF exposure limits and implementation practices. As you observe in your letter, there has been increased research on the subject, usage has increased dramatically, and usage patterns and practices have changed. The Commission is currently considering a draft rulemaking that would invite public comment on the current RF safety standards and testing requirements, as well as a variety of other matters related to RF safety. We have coordinated our activities in this area with other federal agencies and are committed to continue doing so as we move forward.

While we cannot comment on or prejudge a pending Commission decision, if such an inquiry is initiated by the Commission, we would look forward to receiving comments from experts, including those at other relevant federal agencies, as well as from various stakeholders and the general public, throughout the course of this proceeding once the Commissioners duly consider whether to approve the inquiry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julius P. Knapp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Julius P. Knapp
Chief
Office of Engineering and Technology



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

October 5, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

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Julius P. Knapp
Chief
Office of Engineering and Technology



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October 5, 2012

JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Peter Welch
U.S. House of Representatives
1404 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Welch:

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Office of Engineering and Technology